

If you have trouble hearing, why not watch with captions?

Captions are available on television programs, commercials, DVDs, cinema screenings and theatre performances.

captions make a difference



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media access australia

www.mediaaccess.org.au

What are captions?

Captions are used to help people understand the soundtrack of a TV program, movie, video or DVD. They re-create the entire soundtrack in text format, usually at the bottom of the screen, so that the viewer can read it.

Captions are coloured and positioned on the screen to show each character's speech. Sound effects, music and other audio cues are also incorporated in the captions so that all relevant information is available to the viewer.

This is the main difference between captions and subtitles, because subtitles just show a translation of the dialogue into English.



Sound Effect

South Australian Lotteries Commission advertisement



Music

Toyota advertisement



Positioning

Australian Caption Centre advertisement

Who uses captions?

Anyone, anywhere can use captions. Captions can enhance communication in any situation. Listed below are groups of people who find captions particularly useful:

Deaf people and hearing impaired people

People who are Deaf or hearing impaired rely on captions to follow the soundtrack of television programs, videos, DVDs and cinema movie screenings.

People trying to hear in noisy areas

Captions can be used by anyone who is trying to watch a broadcast in a noisy environment e.g. shopping centres, exhibitions, expos, conferences, airports, banks, gyms, pubs and clubs. The use of captions on broadcasts in public areas complies with the spirit of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

People learning English

Many language schools use captioned DVDs, videos and television programs to help teach people English. The combination of the sound and text enables students to listen to the pronunciation of words whilst reading the captions.

People teaching and training

By combining the written and spoken word, captions help make training and education more accessible and easier for everyone to comprehend. They can be used by any organisation including schools, TAFEs, universities, hospitals and within the hospitality industry.

Some people even use captions to watch TV while talking on the phone.

How to watch captions on television

Television programs are captioned using closed captions. In order to see captions you will need a digital or a teletext television.

Note that TV programs are currently broadcast in both analog and digital format, but the analog signal is due to be switched off from December 2009, with the process completed across the country by 2013. Once the analog signal is switched off, analog TVs will only work if they are connected to a set-top box.

Before purchasing a digital TV or set-top box, ensure that you are located in a digital receptive area. To find out if you are, contact Digital Broadcasting Australia at www.dba.org.au or contact Media Access Australia. Most places are in a digital area.

Digital TV

Digital TVs that conform to Australian Standard AS4933, or have the HD Tick, should display captions.





Digital set-top boxes

A digital set-top box can be connected to any TV and it will enable you to access digital television as well as captions. Set-top boxes that conform to Australian Standard AS4933 should display captions.

Teletext TV

To access closed captions on a teletext TV you will need to:

1. Select channel.
2. Press the TEXT/TELETEXT button on the remote control or the button marked . A black strip will appear at the top of the screen, or the screen may go black. (If you are watching Channel 7, a full menu of Austext will appear.)
3. Press the numbers 8-0-1. This will reveal page 801 and captions will be superimposed over the picture of the captioned program. You may need to wait a few seconds for the teletext system to turn to page 801.
4. To change channels you will need to press the TEXT/TELETEXT or  button to turn off the captions on the channel you are currently on, change the channel, and then press the TEXT/TELETEXT button followed by 8-0-1 again.

How do you know if a program has been captioned?

All programs between 6.00pm – 10.30pm and all news and current affairs programs outside these hours on all free-to-air networks (including ABC, Seven Network, Nine Network, Network Ten and SBS) are captioned.

Check your local TV guide – captioned programs are indicated by an (S), S*, (ST) or CC in the program listing.

Look for the  or  logos on the program or in one corner of the screen as the program is starting. There are programs captioned outside of these hours which are captioned at a network's discretion.

Subscription Television

It is possible to watch both free-to-air and subscription television programs with captions through subscription television, provided you are receiving a digital service. On your subscription television box, scroll through the set-up menu to find the Closed Captions option and turn it on.

Captioned DVDs

DVD players can be connected to your television like a VCR. Some computers have built-in DVD players, and the Sony PlayStation® 2 and PlayStation® 3, and the Microsoft Xbox and Xbox 360 can also play DVDs.

Many DVDs that you will be able to buy or rent will have either English subtitles, captions or an option for both in the menu. Captions can be advertised as English Captions, Subtitles for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, English SDH, or Closed Captions.

Captioned DVDs can be purchased from any DVD retailer or hired from any DVD store.

Media Access Australia acknowledges the support of the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for their annual grant towards the captioning of educational DVDs.

Access features as they may appear on a DVD cover

Approximate Running Time: 105 minutes

Subtitles: German, French, Italian, English

Languages: English, German

Audio: Dolby 2.0, Dolby Digital 5.1



English Captions: Yes
(Descriptive subtitles for the hearing impaired)



English Audio Description: Yes
(Descriptive narration)

Problems with TV captions

There are two types of problems that may occur with analog captions: reception and transmission problems.

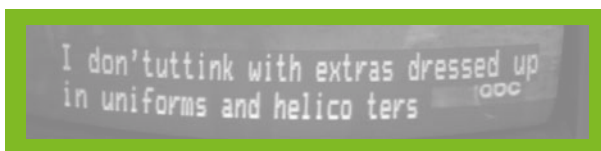
Reception problems

Teletext TVs often have reception problems. As the caption signal that is transmitted from the station to your TV set is a delicate signal, even slight reception problems can have a very noticeable effect on the quality of captions.

Common examples of reception problems include captions:

- with jumbled letters;
- with disappearing letters;
- with numbers instead of letters;
- at different heights or sticking on the page with some lines missing.

Captions with reception problems might look something like this:



These problems may mean that your teletext TV needs fine-tuning – check your TV manual for information on how to do this.

Digital equipment can also experience problems displaying captions. For more information, contact Media Access Australia.

Transmission problems

Occasionally there are transmission problems at the TV stations which affect the captions. Often this is a problem from one particular station and may be short-lived. If you are having problems with more than one station consistently, it usually indicates a reception problem.

If you are experiencing a transmission problem in your area and you have ruled out that it is a reception problem, you can visit www.mediaaccess.org.au to make an online complaint to the station, or you can contact Media Access Australia for advice.

Caption equipment summary

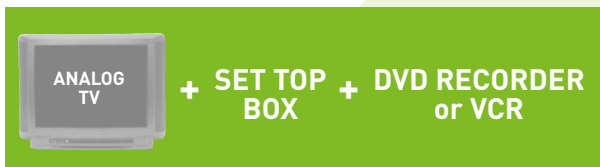
Equipment that you can use in DIGITAL areas of Australia (most areas):

To **watch TV programs with captions**, you will need a teletext TV, or any TV (teletext or non-teletext) connected to a digital set-top box, or a TV with an inbuilt digital tuner.



To **record TV programs with captions**, you will either need:

1. Any TV (teletext or non-teletext) connected to a digital set-top box and a standard VCR or DVD recorder, or

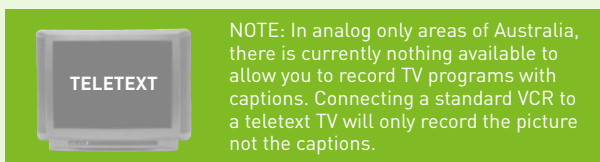


2. A digital TV connected to a standard VCR or DVD recorder.



Equipment that you can use to view captions if you live in an ANALOG only area of Australia:

To **watch TV programs with captions**, you will need a teletext TV.



Captioning regulations and codes

There are regulations, codes and agreements covering television, pay television, and cinema captions.

For more up-to-date information on regulations, please visit www.mediaaccess.org.au → Legislation

Cinema captioning

You can find a list of upcoming films and session times at www.yourlocalcinema.com.au. Film session times can also be found in the cinema listings in your local paper – look for the symbols 'OC' or 'S'.

Theatre and Live Performances

You can find a list of the upcoming performances at www.mediaaccess.org.au → Theatre.

About Media Access Australia

Media Access Australia is a not-for-profit, public benevolent institution and Australia's primary media access organisation. Our role is to provide information about media access and to develop and apply technological solutions to media access issues, including captioning and audio description.

Although MAA is based in Sydney, we work in collaboration with consumer organisations, Government and industry across the country.

For more information about captioning and other media access issues, please contact:

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